New Jersey Assessment of Skills and Knowledge (NJ ASK) 2012

A Summary of Core Test Design and Administrative Features for Grades 3–8

New Jersey Department of Education
Division of Standards, Assessments, and Curriculum
Office of Assessments

February 2012

Goals

- To measure and promote student achievement of challenging state curriculum standards.
- To provide accurate and meaningful information about student performance.
- To meet state and federal accountability requirements.

Assessment Schedule

Grades 3 and 4

May 7 –11, 2012

Day 1 – Monday, May 7, 2012 – Language Arts Literacy
Day 2 – Tuesday, May 8, 2012 – Language Arts Literacy
Day 3 – Wednesday, May 9, 2012 – Mathematics
Day 4 – Thursday, May 10, 2012 – Mathematics
Day 5 – Friday, May 11, 2012 – Grade 4 Science

Make-ups
May 14 – 18, 2012 (Flexible)

See DOE website for full details:
http://www.nj.gov/education/assessment/schedule1011.pdf

Note: Some districts with different grade configurations have received approval for an alternative testing schedule.

Assessment Schedule

Grades 5 and 6

April 30 –May 3, 2012

Day 1 – Monday, April 30, 2012 – Language Arts Literacy
Day 2 – Tuesday, May 1, 2012 – Language Arts Literacy
Day 3 – Wednesday, May 2, 2012 – Mathematics
Day 4 – Thursday, May 3, 2012 – Mathematics

Make-ups
May 7 – 11, 2012 (Flexible)

See DOE website for full details:
http://www.nj.gov/education/assessment/schedule1011.pdf

Note: Some districts with different grade configurations have received approval for an alternative testing schedule.

Assessment Schedule

Grades 7 and 8

April 23 -26, 2012

Day 1 – Monday, April 23, 2012 – Language Arts Literacy
Day 2 – Tuesday, April 24, 2012 – Language Arts Literacy
Day 3 – Wednesday, April 25, 2012 – Mathematics
Day 4 – Thursday, April 26, 2012 – Mathematics (Day 2 for Grades 7)
Grade 8 Science

Make-ups
April 30 – May 4, 2012 (Flexible)

See DOE website for full details:
http://www.nj.gov/education/assessment/schedule1011.pdf

Note: Some districts with different grade configurations have received approval for an alternative testing schedule.

Language Arts Literacy – Reading

- NJ ASK 3-5 operational tests include three reading passages at each grade level;
- NJ ASK 6-8 operational tests include four reading passages per grade level;
- Reading passages include literature as well as informational or “everyday” reading selections from a wide array of sources.
- Additional field-test passages and items are included.

Language Arts Literacy – Writing

- LAL writing tasks require students to respond in a variety of modes and forms (e.g., expository, persuasive, narrative) and for a variety of purposes, in keeping with standard 3.2 of the NJCCCS;

- These tasks may be labeled “Speculative”, “Explanatory”, “Expository”, or “Persuasive”; some, like the persuasive prompt, are familiar; others will be newer types of tasks. All measure writing skills found in the NJCCCS and the standards clarification documents.

- The prompt formats can vary and should not be confused with the underlying skills or domains which the writing tasks seek to measure.

- No picture prompt at any grade level.

LAL Test Design Grades 3-5

Test Types/Strand (additional field test content embedded throughout)	Reading Selections	MC (Number of Items)	OE (Number of Items)	Writing Tasks (Number of Items)	Time on Task(s) in Approximate Minutes	Total Points*
Writing (Speculative or Expository)				2	30 Minutes each	20 (10 points each)
Reading Passages	3	18 (Grade 3) 24 (Grade 4) 30 (Grade 5)	3 (Grade 3) 3 (Grade 4) 3 (Grade 5)		30 Minutes each	30 (Grade 3) 36 (Grade 4) 42 (Grade 5)
Total	3	18 (Grade 3) 24 (Grade 4) 30 (Grade 5)	3 (Grade 3) 3 (Grade 4) 3 (Grade 5)	2	150	50 (Grade 3) 56 (Grade 4) 62 (grade 5)

* NJ ASK 3-5 writing tasks are scored using a 5-point rubric. O/E reading items are scored on a 0-4 rubric.

LAL Test Design Grades 6-8

Test Types/Strand (additional field test content embedded throughout)	Reading Selections	MC (Number of Items)	OE (Number of Items)	Writing Tasks (Number of Items)	Time on Task(s) in Approximate Minutes	Total Points*
Writing: Persuasive Prompt				1	45 minutes each	12
Writing: Explanatory or speculative prompt				1	30 minutes each	6
Reading Passage	4	36	4		30 minutes each	52
Total				2	195 minutes	70

* NJ ASK 6-8 writing tasks are scored using a 6-point rubric. OE reading items are scored on a 0-4 point rubric.

LAL Writing Prompts (Grades 3-5)

- The speculative prompt presents a brief scenario which students use as springboard for writing a story, drawing on stories they have read as well as on their own experiences to develop ideas.

- There are two formats for assessing expository writing: one introduces a topic in a brief verbal prompt and asks students to develop a composition about that topic; the second format uses a poem to introduce a topic. That topic is elaborated further by a brief verbal prompt that students use as a basis for writing their composition.

- The expository prompts are based on topics familiar to students and asks them to describe, discuss, or explain, some aspect of the topic. Students are able to draw on their own experience and what they know to develop their ideas for their composition.

LAL Writing Prompts (Grades 6-8)

- The speculative prompt presents a brief scenario which students use as a springboard for writing a story, drawing on stories they have read as well as on their own experiences.

- Explanatory prompts present students with a topic based on a quotation or adage, or based on a familiar subject. Each is a springboard for the student to write an essay. Explanatory writing is used to share knowledge and to convey ideas and experiences. Explanatory writing may be based on the writer's personal knowledge and experience or on information presented to the writer.

- Persuasive writing tasks elicit the student's point of view on a given controversy or topic arising from interpersonal, school/community, or social contexts.

Sample Expository Prompt (Grades 3-5)

Most people have a special activity or hobby that they enjoy. Some people collect things while others like to read or play games. What activity do you like to do?

Write a composition describing what you enjoy doing. Explain why that activity is special to you.

Sample Expository Prompt (Grades 3-5)

(Students first listen to and read the Shel Silverstein poem "Moon-Catchin' Net")

Has there ever been something you wanted very much that you may or may not have been able to get? Write a composition about what you wanted.

Include the following:

- What did you want to have and why did you want this?
- If you got it, explain how it happened and why you were successful.
- Explain how you might be successful in getting it in the future.

Sample Speculative Prompt (Grades 3-5)

When the school bell rang, Katie and Pablo grabbed their books and raced out of the classroom. They had been looking forward to this afternoon all week long. Today they were going to go on an adventure.

Write a story about the adventure Katie and Pablo had after they left school.

Sample Explanatory Prompt (Grades 6-8)

Many students enjoy doing something special for their family and friends. For example, they may take care of their younger sibling or help cook a favorite meal.

Write a letter to your family or friends that describes something special that you would like to do for them. Explain why this would be something special and how your family or friends might react. Be sure to include details and facts to support your explanation.

Sample Explanatory Prompt (Grades 6-8)

Life can be full of pleasant surprises. Identify a time when you experienced a pleasant surprise.

Write a composition for your teacher about a time when you experienced a pleasant surprise. Explain why this surprise was unexpected and how it affected your life in a positive way. Be sure to explain your choice by using details and examples.

Sample Explanatory Prompt (Grades 6-8)

Consider how the following quotation is related to you.

"Even if you're on the right track, you'll get run over if you just sit there."

--Will Rogers

Cherokee-American, cowboy, comedian, and actor

Write an essay for your language arts teacher explaining what this quotation means to you. Use details, reasons, and examples in your explanation.

Sample Persuasive Writing Prompt (Grades 6-8)

Writing Situation

A well-known musical group has offered to give a free concert at your school. There has been much debate as to when the concert should be held – during or after school. You decide to write a letter to your principal expressing your opinion about when the concert should be held.

Writing Task

Write a letter to your principal supporting your position whether the concert should be held during school time or held after school. Use reasons, facts, examples and/or other evidence to support your position.

Mathematics REMINDER

- ALL students are allowed to use blank grid/graph paper during ALL parts of the Mathematics section of the NJ ASK.
- In 2011, there was a new Mathematics Manipulatives Sheet for grades 5 – 7. The sheet can be found at website below:

http://www.state.nj.us/education/assessment/ms/5-8/ref/math/MathManipulatives09G567.pdf

NJ ASK 3-8 Mathematics: Calculator Use Policy

- The Short Constructed Response (SCR) part of the NJ ASK grades 3 through 8 is non-calculator active for all students, including students with disabilities.

- In Grades 3 and 4, calculators is permitted on one of the five remaining parts. This part will include multiple-choice items and one extended constructed-response (ECR) items.

- In Grades 5 through 8, calculators is permitted on three of the five remaining parts. These parts will include multiple-choice and extended constructed-response (ECR) items.

NJ ASK 3-8 Mathematics: Calculator Use Policy (cont.)

Students with disabilities may use calculators as an appropriate special education modification under the following circumstances:

- Special education students whose documented educational disability limits them for calculating mathematically may use a calculator on the non-calculator sections (with the exception of SCR as noted previously) if the student uses a calculator or other manipulatives during routine instruction, except while the student is actually being taught to calculate.

- Students accommodated through the use of calculators must have the assessment administered to them in an alternative setting.

- Beginning with the May 2011 administration, the use of a calculator or other specific manipulatives as an instructional and assessment accommodation must be documented in the student's IEP or 504 plan. The Short Constructed-Response (SCR) section will remain non-calculator active.

Mathematics (Grades 3–5)

MC – multiple choice, 1 raw score point
SCR – short constructed-response, 1 raw score point
ECR -- extended constructed-response, 3 raw score points

		Grade 3 (1 calculator active part)	Grade 4 (1 calculator active part)	Grade 5 (3 calculator active parts)
Item Count by Type (does not include embedded field test content)	MC	35	35	33
	SCR	6	6	8
	ECR	3	3	3
Total raw score points possible		50	50	50
Approximate total testing time (including field test content)		131 minutes	131 minutes	136 minutes

Mathematics (Grades 6–8)

MC – multiple choice, 1 raw score point
SCR – short constructed-response, 1 raw score point
ECR -- extended constructed-response, 3 raw score points

		Grade 6 (3 calculator active parts)	Grade 7 (3 calculator active parts)	Grade 8 (3 calculator active parts)
Item Count by Type (does not include embedded field test content)	MC	32	32	32
	SCR	8	8	8
	ECR	3	3	3
Total raw score points possible		49	49	49
Approximate total testing time (including field test content)		133 minutes	133 minutes	133 minutes

Mathematics: Points by Standard

Point Breakdown	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8
Standard 1	20	20	18	13	13	13
Standard 2	11	11	16	14	14	14
Standard 3	11	11	8	14	14	14
Standard 4	8	8	8	8	8	8
Total Points	50	50	50	49	49	49

Mathematics
Sample SCR Items

Grade 3

Standard to be Assessed

4.4.3 C.2 "Represent all possibilities for a simple counting situation in an organized way and draw conclusions from this representation."

Item:

A lunch menu has 3 beverages selections: water, juice, and milk. The menu also offers 2 sandwich selections: turkey and peanut butter. How many different meals on one beverage and one sandwich are possible? (answer: 6)

Without the distractor of "5" present, the item is a better assessor if a child can perform systematic listing to get the correct answer of "6."

Mathematics
Sample SCR Items

Grade 4

Standard to be Assessed

4.1.4 B.4 "Use an efficient and accurate paper-and-pencil procedure for computation with whole numbers- addition of three digit numbers."

Item:

Inez has a toy car collection. She has 55 red cars, 67 blue cars, and 123 orange cars. How many cars does she have in all? (answer: 245)

This standard cannot be assessed with a calculator active item because the standard requires the use of paper-pencil to perform the correct computation.

Mathematics
Sample SCR Items

Grade 5

Standard to be Assessed

4.1.5 B.3 "Use an efficient and accurate paper-and-pencil procedure for division of a 3-digit number by a 2-digit number."

Item:

A gallon contains 128 ounces. Paul wants to divide 3 gallons of apple cider equally among 2 dozen friends at his party. How many ounces of apple cider will each friend receive? (answer: 16)

This standard cannot be assessed with a calculator active item. Nor could this standard be assessed with a multiple-choice item as students could multiply the answer choices by 24 until they get 384.

Mathematics
Sample Non-Calculator Multiple-Choice Items

Grade 3

Standard to be Assessed

4.3.3 D.2 "Understand and use the concepts of equals, less than, and greater than to describe relations between numbers."

Item:

Which number would make the number sentence 438 – ? =259 true?

A. 217
B. 211
C. 189
D. 179*

Mathematics
Sample Non-Calculator Multiple-Choice Items

Grade 4

Standard to be Assessed

4.1.4 B.5 "Construct and use procedures for performing decimal addition and subtraction."

Item:

What is the difference of 23.79 – 4.93?

A. 12.86
B. 18.86*
C. 19.86
D. 21.26

Mathematics
Sample Non-Calculator Multiple-Choice Items

Grade 5

Standard to be Assessed

4.3.5 D.1 "Solve simple linear equations with manipulatives and informally."

Item:

If 14 x n = 252, what is the value of n?

A. 13

B. 18*

C. 23

D. 28

Mathematics Sample SCR Item

Grade 6

Standard to be Assessed

4.4.7 C.3 “Apply techniques of systematic listing, counting, and reasoning in a variety of different contexts.”

Item

How many ways can a teacher choose 2 students from a group of 4 students?
Answer: 6

Note: The student can determine the method of solution, from creating student identifiers and a systematic listing to a more formal mathematical method.

Mathematics Sample Non-Calculator Multiple-Choice Items

Grade 7

Standard Assessed

4.1.6 B.8 "Understand and apply the standard algebraic order of operations for the four basic operations, including the appropriate use of parentheses."

Item

What is the value of the expression 15−3(2+1)?

A. 108
B. 36
C. 23
D. 6*

Note: Since many modern calculators perform calculations using the standard algebraic order of operations this Cumulative Progress Indicator (CPI) needs to be assessed in a non-calculator format. The incorrect answer choices may contain common errors – for B above the subtraction was performed before the multiplication.

Mathematics Sample Multiple-Choice Calculator Item

Grade 8

Standard to be Assessed

4.2.7.D.1 “Solve problems requiring calculations that involve different units of measurement within a measurement system.”

Item

Luis is tiling the rectangular floor of a room measuring 8 feet 6 inches by 12 feet. How many 6 inch by 6 inch tiles will Luis need to tile the floor without overlapping?

A. 408*
B. 287
C. 204
D. 172

Note: Since the essence of the CPI is about converting units using the appropriate conversion factors, a calculator would be permitted to facilitate calculations.

Science (Grades 4 & 8)

		Grade 4	Grade 8
Item Count by Type (does not include field test content)	Multiple Choice	33	48
	Open-Ended	2	2
Total raw score points possible		39	54
Approximate total testing time (includes field test content)		60 minutes	120 minutes

- Science assessment includes four parts –
- Each MC item is worth one point; each open-ended item is worth up to three points.
- Each open-ended item is scored using an item-specific rubric.
- Life Science – 40% of the test
- Physical Science – 30% of the test
- Earth Science – 30% of the test.

Science 5.3.4.C1

- Organisms can survive only in environments in which their needs are met. Within ecosystems, organisms interact and are dependent on their physical and living environment.

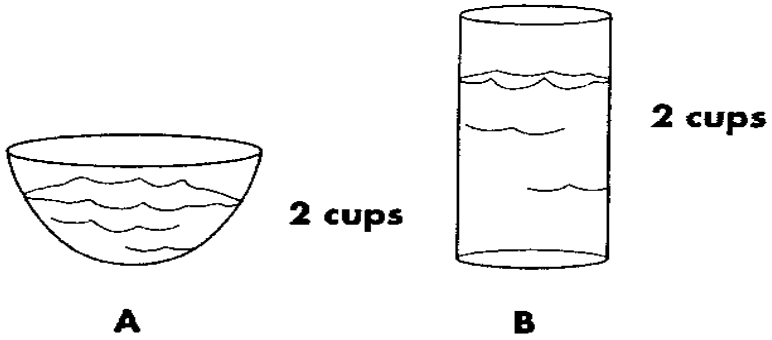
- In 1962, Rachel Carson wrote the book Silent Spring, warning society about the effects of insecticides. Which of the following facts about ecosystems explains why insecticides are harmful to the environment?

A. Ecosystems are very large.
B. Ecosystems have both living and non-living things.
C. Living things in ecosystems are interdependent.*
D. Many kinds of organisms are found in difference ecosystems.

Science 5.2.4.B.1

Many substances can be changed from state to another by heating or cooling.

Two cups of water were placed into each of the open containers. Predict what the water levels will be tomorrow.



Ⓐ **The same amount of water will be left in both.**

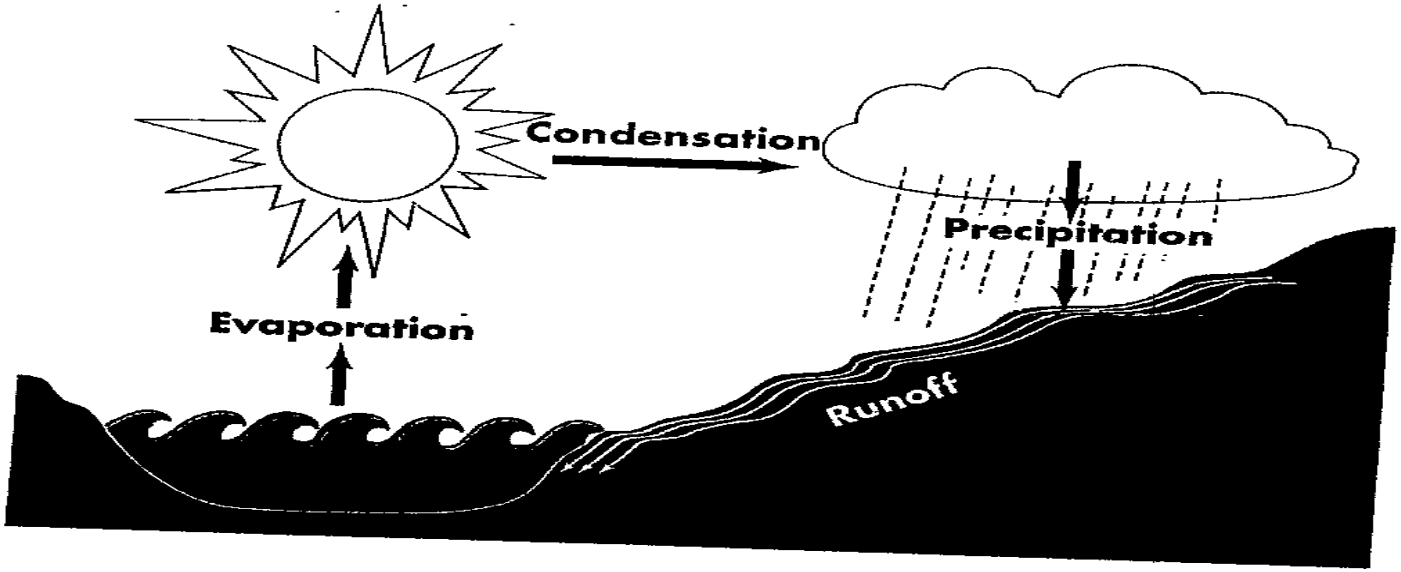
Ⓑ **There will be more water left in container B than in A.** ★

Ⓒ **There will be more water in container A than in B.**

Ⓓ **They will both still have two cups of water.**

Science 5.4.4G.3

Most of Earth's surface is covered by water. Water circulates through crust, oceans, and atmosphere in what is known as the water cycle.

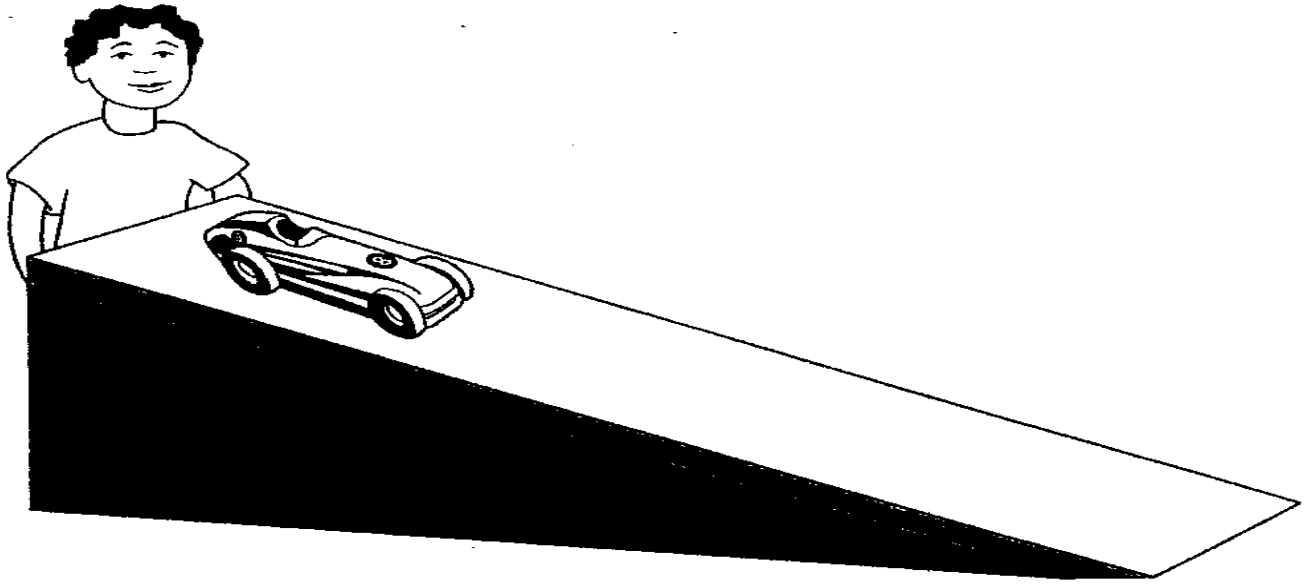


During which part of this cycle does it snow?

- Ⓐ **Evaporation**
- Ⓑ **Condensation**
- Ⓒ **Precipitation** ✗
- Ⓓ **Runoff**

Science 5.2.4.E.2

There is always a force involved when something starts moving or changes its speed or direction. A greater force can make an object move faster and farther.



Jim put a toy car on a ramp. The car slowly moved down the ramp. What was it about the ramp's surface that caused the car to move slowly?

How could Jim change the ramp's surface to get the car to move faster?

Science 5.2.8.A3

Properties of solids, liquids, and gases are explained by a model of matter as composed of tiny particles (atoms) in motion.

A student places Beaker X containing one liter of water on a burner. The student places Beaker Y containing one liter of water in the freezer. What is occurring in the samples?

A. Beaker X: phase change
   Beaker Y: chemical change

B. Beaker X: chemical reaction
   Beaker Y: physical change

C. Beaker X: increasing kinetic energy
   Beaker Y: decreasing kinetic energy

D. Beaker X: cold is moving out of the water
   Beaker Y: cold is moving into the water

Science 5.3.8.C1

Symbiotic interactions among organisms of different species can be classified as:

- Producer/consumer
- Predator/prey
- Parasite/host
- Scavenger/prey
- Decomposer/prey

Prey	Predator
grass	antelopes and zebras
antelopes	lion, cheetah, and leopard
zebra	lion, cheetah, and leopard
wildebeest	lion
giraffe	lion
dead animals	vulture

A scientist constructs a table to show the complex food web of an African savanna. Which population would be expected to increase the most in response to an increase in the lion population?

A. vulture
B. cheetah
C. antelope
D. wildebeest

Science 5.4.8.A2

Earth's tilt, rotation, and revolution around the Sun cause changes in the height and the duration of the Sun in the sky. These factors combine to explain the changes in the length of day and seasons.

Choose two consecutive seasons.

- Fully describe the changes in daylight hours you will experience as you go from the first day of one season to the last day of the other season you have chosen.
- Explain what is happening to cause these changes.

Spanish Versions for English Language Learners (ELL)

- Spanish versions of the NJ ASK 3-8 are available in all content areas – Language Arts Literacy, Mathematics, and Science (Grades 4 and 8).

- Participation/Eligibility guidelines are posted here:

https://www.measinc.com/nj/Downloads/NJASK/NJ_ASK_Spanish_Eligibility_Guidelines.pdf

- Spanish versions are ordered by districts through the usual Online Materials Survey process.

Suggested Websites

New Jersey Department of Education
www.state.nj.us/education/

Office of Assessments
www.nj.gov/education/assessment/

Office of Academic Standards
www.nj.gov/education/aps

New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards
www.state.nj.us/education/cccs

Common Core State Standards Initiative
www.corestandards.org/

Measurement, Inc.
www.measinc.com/njask

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